Breaking News: Junior Class Joke Will Graham Does It With School Prodigy Hannibal Lecter

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Breaking News: Junior Class Joke Will Graham Does It With School Prodigy Hannibal Lecter

by MxThmxNn

Summary

Will wakes up in someone else's bed. He doesn't remember why, and apparently it's not the reason he thinks.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

This Just In: Will Graham is in Someone's Bed

Hellish, tormenting, gut-wrenching are all words that Will Graham would use to describe his attempts at sleep. It's horrible. He constantly woke up swimming in sweat. Tonight was nothing new.

Yeah, right.

Will's eyes opened sharply, dry and unfocused. His hands clamored at his sides grasping desperately at the sheets by his side. *Smooth.* That was unusual to say the least, the sensation of the blanket under him was nothing like the one he was used to at home. It was soft and comfortable, and there was an unnerving lack of dog hair. He sat in it for a second, the slip of the fabric quickly became its own brand of uncomfortable.

Will blinked hard a couple times to see if he was just hallucinating again. Then the realization hit, scarier than any nightmare. *This isn't his room* . He plopped back down into the bed and pulled the comforter at his side over his shoulders.

And then the blanket pulled back.

Well, there was no sentient blanket here but somebody did pull the covers back over themself. Somehow the night couldn't get worse for Will. He'd just had a terrible nightmare, woke up in somebody else's room, and they were in that bed with him. He wasn't a drunk by any means, usually his dad would let him have a finger of whiskey with him on weekends, but he had to have been absolutely fucking wasted to be in this position on a school night.

"Another nightmare, Will?"

That was another piece of information the teen didn't need. He was in bed with another guy, this was going to make gossip headlines. Will really wanted to scream, nearly choking it back. Even at this late hour, the voice of the person next to him had a familiar European accent.

“You really should try to sleep, Will,” Hannibal said quietly.

“You’re kidding me right?” Will stammered, reaching for his glasses on the ornate night stand. “Please tell me I didn’t just have a one-night-stand with you,” he laughed awkwardly, swinging his feet over the edge of the bed. The floor is cold and smooth under his feet. He frantically rose from the bed, cool air attacks his back. He turns to look at the student a year-and-a-half his senior, laying down on his side. Even while attempting to sleep, he is rigid. Guilt started to overcome Will, he stared intently at the sweaty indentation of his body marked into the satin sheets. *Disgusting* .

Hannibal exhaled sharply through his nose, his eyes still shut. “No, I assure you there was nothing of that nature. Now please, there are classes in the morning, come back to bed,” he said nonchalantly.

Will scrubbed his hands down his face with absolute disbelief, glasses sitting askew on his nose. “You’ve got to be joking me. How drunk was I?”

“As far as I’m aware you’re sober.”

“Oh come on, I wake up in your bed, only in my sleep shirt and underwear, there is no way I didn’t black out and make some kind of,” he paused, “ *regrettable* decisions.” His eyes darted between the senior and his clothes folded neatly on the chair across the room.

The older boy simmered in the ridiculously large bed. He sat up, resting against the headboard. His hair fell loosely around his face and a slouchy red sweater hung around his svelte frame. This was the most undone Will has ever seen Hannibal Lecter. He met Will with a relaxed smile, eyes dark and glossed over with sleep. *He’s fighting back a laugh.* “Please, take my word for it, we didn’t do anything.”

“That doesn’t explain why I’m in your bed!” Will exclaimed, a little too loud for the hour of night. He drew his arms closer to him, fingers rubbing circles into his palms for comfort.

His paranoid words clearly stung Hannibal as his face twitched in annoyment. “Calm down. Sharing beds with other men is far more common outside of the United States, it has far less

of a homosexual implication there."

Hannibal stared at Will like he was going insane. Like a lost child. Like there wasn't anything, anything at all alarming about what was happening. Will stared at him, slack-jawed and stuttering over words he couldn't quite find. He could feel his cheeks flush with embarrassment and another nervous laugh building up in his chest.

"That isn't going to help my case when I walk into the school building now is it," Will deadpanned. "I can already hear Freddie Lounds' stupid headline now. Breaking News: Junior Class Joke Will Graham does it with School Prodigy Hannibal Lecter." Will announced, drawing out an arc with his hands in the air.

Will's arms dropped to his sides again. He let the air still around him and Hannibal once again. Pale rays of moonlight scattered on the floor through the large window to the left of the room. Its curtains parted just enough to let in some light.

Hannibal's head tipped to the side, face entirely neutral. "That does sound like one of her blog posts," His voice was amused, Hannibal was secretly an avid reader of his classmate's trashy gossip site, "but I'm sure you'd like me to do some explaining."

"Yes, you have quite a bit to explain, Hannibal."

Read Now! Someone Just Killed Cassie Boyle

Will barely made it though the door of his first period English class alive. He was scrawny enough that getting swept up by the crowd was basically a free mode of transportation, albeit a hazardous one.

“Mr. Graham.”

“Mr. Sutcliffe.”

“Take your seat.”

Will gave his teacher a nod and slumped into his chair behind Brian Zeller. AKA the only football player that hasn’t picked on Will during band practice. He wasn’t particularly the best for group projects, but Will liked him enough.

“Hey! Willy G,” Zeller greeted, holding his hand up in the air.

“What?” Will replied, ignoring the hand. “And for the love of God *please* stop calling me that.” Will pulled his beat up notebook and copy of *Fahrenheit 451* from his backpack, the same one he’s had for the last seven years. He placed them on his desk haphazardly. Next came his school-issued computer and worn corded headphones.

Brian scoffed, letting his hand come down with shame. Will looked back up at him, the bottom of his smirking face cut off by the frame of his glasses. “Leavin’ me hanging, Graham?”

“Oh, sorry,” Will timidly delivered. He wiped his hand off on his jeans before giving Zeller a weak hi-five.

The tardy bell rang and Mr. Sutcliffe immediately began reading off his attendance roster. The poor souls who sauntered in the door at the bell caught the old man's evil side eye.

"Bloom, Alana."

"Here." Alana Bloom has had a crush on Hannibal for months. Will caught her standing by his locker fawning over his expensive clothes and genius brain. And his mathematically perfect face, shiny brown hair, stunning hands-- Will didn't get his appeal.

The teacher got barely halfway down the list of names before an announcement blared over the speaker system.

"This is Principal Prunell. It has come to our attention that there is a *situation* with one of our students. The police have advised us to evacuate the building and cancel school for the rest of the day while they investigate the building." The woman's stern voice was immediately drowned out by excited whoops. It didn't matter that there was a serious emergency, school was out.

Will slumped in his seat, relieved. He picked up his bag, carrying the stuff on his desk in his arms tightly. He stayed behind and waited for the classroom to empty.

"Is that essay still due on Friday?" He asked his teacher.

"Yes, just because we're not in class that day doesn't mean I'll extend the Google Classroom deadline."

Seriously? Whatever. Will gave Mr. Sutcliffe a pained smile and stepped out of the deserted classroom. Will might as well consider himself illiterate, he couldn't write literary analyses to save his life. He was much more suited to writing about less subjective things, easier on his overactive mind.

Will made it out to the grass outside the school fairly easily. The mid-morning sun beat down on his neck. He kept his head down as he walked, watching the turf under his feet. He wore fairly new construction-style work boots, a gift from himself. The toes had been scuffed but they were still stiff at the ankles. School saved him from work on the boatyard, but he liked the shoes. They were protective, safe.

“Graham!”

“Bev,” Will answered back. Beverly Katz, one of the only people he could call a friend.

“Did you know what happened?”

“No, what?”

“Freddie Lounds, first on the scene,” She reported, pointing at her phone. Will leaned into her shoulder, looking down at the dim screen. A picture of the scene was front and center on the blogpost. “The devil works hard but Freddie works harder.”

The picture was gorey and rather obscene. Freshman Cassie Boyle impaled on a pair of antlers right in the center of the football field. Freddie had the decency to censor the girl’s body as she was laying there, naked. The legality of Freddie’s weird news blog was extremely debatable.

“Well that’s one way to show school spirit. Zoom in, see those are taken from the statue in the main hallway,” Will directed. The horns Cassie was mounted on came right off the statue of the school’s mascot, the ravenstag.

Beverly gave her friend a smirk, eyebrow peaking upwards, impressed. “That’s some eye you got there, Graham. You really could be a profiler for the FBI.”

Will raised his eyebrows and gave Bev an accusatory look. He let out a scoff. “Me? Nah, I’m much better off fixing boats with my dad.” Beverly’s elbow jabbed sharply under Will’s ribs.

“The hell was that for? Jesus, Bev.”

“It’s to snap you out of it.”

“Out of what?”

“Out of telling yourself that you’re going to do lame shit like be a boat mechanic. C’mon Will, you’d be great,” She encouraged.

“No, no, they wouldn’t let me in as an agent, with my fucked up brain? No way.”

“Woah, you unstable?”

Will rolled his eyes halfway to Mars and let out a laugh after. “Yeah.” Beverly dropped her offended expression to laugh alongside him.

“And you also left the building at the bus exits, your house is all the way over there.” Bev pointed to the patch of woods to the right of the school, on the other side was a small suburb.

“You wanna go check out the body don’t you.”

“Got me.”

“Let’s go.”

“Hannibal, I know about Cassie Boyle. I remember that much,” Will interrupted. The cold floor shooting chills from his ankles up to his spine. He stood with his arms crossed, hip jutting out in defiance.

Hannibal rolled his lips inwards, looking off to the side. Will could see the gears turning in his head. “I see.”

“Now how the hell did I end up here again?”

“If you’d let me complete the summary you’d be on your way much faster.”

“Lecter, I just really need to get home. I don’t have time for your weird explanation. Look, I don’t even need to know if we did anything or not,” Will replied, annoyance souring his words.

Hannibal sighed, disturbed by Will’s insistence that they had any kind of intimate altercation. “Well, *Graham* , as I keep stating, we did not have a one-night stand. Please stop being so suspicious of me, unless there is something you would like to admit.”

Will’s patience was dissolving, he held clear and impatient tension in his jaw. “No- There’s nothing I need to admit there!”

“Lower your voice.”

“I don’t have to listen to you!”

“Will-”

“Just fucking tell me what happened already! I need to get home. My dad is going to kill me if the kids at school don’t eat me alive on Monday!”

“It is Monday.”

“Shut up!” He was getting overwhelmed again. The world swirled around him in a cacophony, too quiet and too loud.

Hannibal rolled his eyes at the petty argument started by the underclassman. He took a brief look at the luminescent face of the moon before taking in a breath to ground himself. The senior readjusted himself in the bed, locking his eyes onto Will’s. “Will Graham, you killed someone. Had I not been there, you would’ve been passed out in front of the school covered in blood.”

Will bit his tongue as shock drained the color from his face. *Okay, how the fuck did that happen?*

Shocking: Graham, Katz, and Lecter Caught Under the Bleachers!

Chapter Notes

tw for a homophobic slur in this chapter, not used by will/hannibal but it's there

also this is really unrealistic and corny but who cares lmao

“Aren’t you supposed to be walking the other way?”

Will stopped, dead in his tracks, heels screeching on the pavement. Bev’s hand suddenly squeezing on his shoulder. The pair whipped their heads around, a towering shadow cast over both of them. *Not him again.*

“What’s it to you, Lecter?” Beverly asked, attempting to maintain composure. From this angle, the beating sun cast severe shadows on the boy’s face. Even if he was just another rich nerd, everybody was undoubtedly a little terrified of Hannibal Lecter. So young yet his angular features frame gave him a crazy authoritative air. Eighteen and already a full-fledged adult, why he was still in a shitty American high school like this one made no sense.

Hannibal pushed the thin oval-shaped glasses up on his nose bridge, the glare of the sun obscuring his eyes entirely. “Nothing. I just thought Graham lived on the other side of the school,” he delivered, pointing to Will, kicking rocks.

Overcoming the momentary shock that this dude even knew his name was quite a feat for Will. He had just assumed that Hannibal at most knew that he constantly glared at him from behind his locker door. Not on a last-name (or any name) basis and certainly not a knew-where-he-lived basis.

“Huh? Yeah I do.” Was all Will could manage.

“What are you? A cop?” Beverly accused immediately, pointer finger aimed at the center of Hannibal’s chest.

The senior’s lip quirked into a half-smile, the very edge of his teeth peeking out from behind his lip. *Cocky bastard.* “A cop?” he repeated, “Far from it.”

“Sure.” The girl rolled her eyes once again. “Shouldn’t *you* be driving off somewhere on your fancy bike or something?”

“A man can enjoy his reading in the peace outside the school stadium can’t he,” Hannibal answered farcically, pointing at the dense copy of *Crime and Punishment* in his hand. *Okay, that wasn’t very convincing of a charade.* Hannibal’s posture relaxed slightly, shoulders dropping. “It seems you two have discovered my fascination with criminal behaviors, I came to sneak past and look at the murder that occurred at the stadium.”

“And he says he’s not a cop.”

“I’ve, *how do you say it?*- spilled my guts, so it is only fair I ask what your intentions are. What are two doing back here?”

Will nervously rubbed circles in the skin of his index finger with his thumb. “We, we’re here to do the same.” He looked up, making eye contact with Hannibal for the first time. He notes that his eyes are a honeyed brown in the sunlight. Hannibal in return peers down Will’s glasses into his own eyes, locked magnetically there. Will vehemently opposed direct eye contact, yet couldn’t look away. The junior blinked aggressively and shook his head, breaking the trance.

“If you keep my secret, I’ll keep yours. We can even look together, detective novel style,” Hannibal proposed, returning to another rehearsed smile.

“Alright, class prodigy’s got a weird side,” Beverly said, looking off distantly to process, nodding slightly. “Deal.” Her agreement reeked of suspicion.

The police were oddly off duty inside the bowl of the stadium. Cars covered the lateral side of the building, yet the medial one was empty. The entrance was covered lazily with caution tape, so lazily in fact the trio ducked right under it no hassle.

“Such carelessness can be used to our advantage,” was Hannibal’s justification.

The body in the center of the field was much cleaner of a scene than Will had anticipated. There was minimal viscera, not a drop of blood in the neon astroturf below. Cassie Boyle had been impaled cleanly on the decapitated brass horns of the school’s statue. Her skin glowed white under the midday sun. Part of him felt wrong for looking at it, seeing as she was a freshman and her nakedness was inherently inappropriate here. *She didn’t want to be seen like this.*

Beverly and Hannibal apparently did not harbor that shame. Both were far closer to the body than Will. Bev was down in an active crouch, staring intently at the incisions made by the twisting horns.She knew better than to touch the body, however, no matter how bad she wanted to. Hannibal leaned over the display, inspecting the sinking stomach of the body. His expression blank as always.

“She was definitely posed on here post-mortem,” Beverly concluded. “These holes almost look pre-cut.”

“Indeed, and it appears like certain organs were taken from her.” Hannibal followed hovering his finger over a suture mark just below the girl’s stomach. The black thread stuck out hideously with her transparent and sallow skin.

Beverly gasped in epiphany, rising slowly. “This looks like a murder from that Shrike guy!” She exclaimed.

“Shrike? If you don’t mind, please enlighten me,” Hannibal inquired. His brows raised and his mouth mimicked real curiosity flawlessly. Beverly was not paying enough attention to see the clear lie on his face.

“Y’know, the guy that’s been going around killing young girls that all look the same in different states. He takes out their organs for who knows what. He’s all the rage in the true crime community, Will would know. Right, Will?” Beverly called.

“What?”

“The Shrike.”

“What about him?”

“This murder! It’s exactly like him!”

“But it’s not. It’s not like him at all, it just looks the same. On a closer look, its nothing like the guy at all,” Will muttered. “Whoever killed Cassie wants everyone to *think* it was the Shrike. But this isn’t the same, it’s too vulgar.”

Beverly raised her eyebrow. “A copycat?”

“Yeah, something like that.”

“Why would anybody wanna copycat a killer? This one has to be from that guy, it fits all the descriptions from the news. Same looking girl, no organs, impaled on some antlers, it’s the Shrike!”

A muffled groan slipped out of Will’s throat, irritated. He moved his glasses away from his nose to pinch at the bridge. “That’s why it’s *not* him. All of it is too careful, and the shrike wouldn’t just put the body in the middle of a field like this. It’s mocking her. The Shrike doesn’t mock he,” Will stopped mid-sentence to think. “He loves them. I know that sounds crazy, but I just know-”

“I hate to interrupt,” Hannibal interjected. He watched Will stutter slightly, attempting to control his tirade. “But I hear radio static, the police are probably on their way, we should go.” Will and Beverly exchanged looks before deciding to trust the senior. Hannibal directed them to an area underneath the bleachers.

“You’re crazier than I thought, Lecter,” Bev whispered, winded.

“I’m not crazy at all. Far from it,” Hannibal answered with a smirk.

She rolled her eyes, “Sure.”

Will was not paying much attention at all, already squinting between the metal steps, trying to see if any of the aforementioned police had shown up. His eyes darted around rapidly, trying to clue in on anything else even Freddie Lounds might’ve missed.

“You’re going to get us caught and suspended.” Beverly Katz, the skeptic. She was by no means a stickler for rules, but her established dislike of her conversation partner made it hard to stay around.

Hannibal scoffed at the remark, rolling his lips inward. He unclasped his hands and adjusted the cuff links on his blazer to keep them busy as he answered. “We won’t get caught, I won’t allow it.”

“You act like you’ve done this before.”

“Maybe I have.”

“Weird.”

“Take that how you will.”

Did this guy always speak in riddles? Doesn't matter. Bev fiddled nervously with the oxidized metal zipper of her leather jacket. "Yeah, I'm not trying to get arrested this semester. Graham!"

"Bev," Will addressed subconsciously. His eyes were still locked on the crime scene.

"I'm gonna go."

"Okay."

Beverly locked her eyes onto Will, hoping he could feel the desperation in her stare. She needed a way out yet he missed the cue.

"Alright, until we meet again, Miss Katz."

Beverly grimaced at the comment. "God, just call me Bev next time."

Hannibal nodded in resignment. "Ah, my apologies, *Bev* ," he corrected. He watched as she scurried her way out an emergency exit in the stadium, black hair swaying wildly as it caught the occasional breeze. He turned his attention back to Will. The Junior was still watching obsessively. He noted the tears in his backpack that was carelessly left half open. Hannibal pushed himself off the wall and walked under the steps closer to Will. He didn't yet approach him, lingering a few feet behind the other boy.

"Y'know staring is rude, Lecter," Will blurted out, breaking the silence.

"Rude? Never. I am merely curious."

"About me?"

“About the murder.”

“I don’t know, do I look like a murder to you. I’m not stupid, I can feel your vulture eyes burning holes into the back of my neck.” Will shifted on his feet to get a closer look at the investigators who gathered at the main entrance, ready to examine the scene. “Figures.”

Hannibal found himself at an unusual loss for words. Will’s directness was astounding, impervious to his facade. “Clever boy.”

Will hummed, ignoring Lecter. “Get down, they might see you.”

“Good idea.”

Hannibal followed Will’s instruction, walking up to his side and kneeling. Will finally looked away from Boyle’s body. He wasn’t used to anybody sitting this close to him if it wasn’t Bev, much less Hannibal goddamn Lecter. He shook his head slightly and cast his gaze down. Lecter’s knees were touching the dusty ground, the dirt already sticking to the gray fabric of his slacks.

“I suppose you’re confused. Before you ask, I don’t mind a little mess every now and then.”

Was he a mind reader?

“I wasn’t going to say that,” Will stuttered out.

“You were about to. Many people believe that I am above getting a little dirt on my hands-knees in this case. I’m not.”

“Real humble,” Will sighed sarcastically.

The investigation was getting serious now. Yellow flags stuck up along the grass and the clicks and flashes of cameras were rapid. The murder was done so cleanly that there wasn't much to discover. The unknowing people were huddled around the display, searching for everything and anything. Distant talks of swabs and samples, nothing within direct earshot though. He doubted these small-town scrubs gave a damn about basic forensic practice. They were barely organized, taking their observation in a strange spiral instead of a grid- optimal for scenes like this.

Will had seen enough, he knew that the investigation would go cold. Just from the very design of the outlandish kill, this wasn't the Shrike, and they'd probably never even catch the real killer. He sat in contemplation, nearly impressed by how seamless it was. But watching the start of the process was all he needed. Now, on his own, he could rot his brain with more important matters: *Who the fuck was doing this… field kabuki?*

He broke his position, instead deciding to sit back against the steel support beam behind him. The cool of the shade was much needed after sitting in direct sunlight for so long. Will brushed his hand over his face to clear the sweat that had collected on his cheeks.

He looked over to Hannibal, face watching every move that the police made. Will observed the ebb and flow of his silent breaths. He carried himself with inhuman stillness.

"I thought you said it was rude to stare, Will," Hannibal teased, not breaking form.

Will scoffed, tipping his head back to meet the metal support behind him. "Well I'm not staring, just curious," he mocked.

"Of me?"

"No, of the murder."

"Do I look like a murder, Will?"

A beat of silence passed but the two boys couldn't help but laugh at the parody of their earlier incident. Will cupped his hand over his mouth to muffle the laughter while Hannibal was, again, unusually silent. Simply a more noticeable smile and a gentle crinkle around his eyes.

A breeze found its way through the tunnel under the bleachers. Will basked in the cold air as it hit the skin on his hands and blew behind his flannel. "But yes, I have a few questions about you."

Hannibal smirked, the stark sunlight tracing the line of his lips. The other boy leaned back as well, legs extending in front of him. He frowned slightly at the imprints of soil streaked on the gray fabric. "Ask away."

"Hm," Will started. The burning questions he had extinguished with shock. He wasn't actually expecting the senior to comply. "What's with you and snooping around crime scenes?"

"I could ask the same of you. But I have always been interested in psychology, it so happens that killers exhibit the sicknesses of the mind so well."

Pretentious asshole.

"That doesn't sound right," Will responded. "There has to be something else, something *wrong* , there's no way it's just the psychology."

"Why do you suppose that, Will?"

"Are you kidding? You're top of the class! Too smart for this school, too rich for this town, and from somewhere in Europe, there has to be another reason!" Will looked up from his lap to see a self assured smile on Hannibal's face. "It has to be some kind of sick vice. Like you have a weird thing for dead bodies. Y'see, Lecter, nobody can be that fucking perfect." Something felt so good about letting his questions just spill. Will had admittedly been hate-stalking Hannibal since his sudden addition to the senior class. There was so little on

Hannibal, not even a social media account, nothing beyond a few articles on science awards he won as a kid. Getting the inside scoop was crucial. Will tried to justify it but couldn't stop the frown on his face from forming. *He really wasn't better than Freddie Lounds, was he?*

Hannibal scoffed, amused. He tilted his head slightly to get a better look at Will, drowning in his own thoughts somewhere. His eyes hidden by the glare in the lens of his glasses. "Ah, you're seeking my flaws. I'm not, inhuman, Will. And my fascination with death is nothing more than a morbid curiosity," He lied. There was more between Hannibal Lecter and death than a morbid curiosity, but Will didn't need to know that. "As for vices, I think you'll take comfort in knowing I have a few of my own."

Will didn't respond, he just sat there to process the senior's words.

"Do you have vices, Will?"

"Who doesn't," he laughed. "Nothing weird though, I drink a little, the stray cigarette at a party, the occasional pity-fuck from a girl. I'm sure other kids do worse. Yours?"

"I like a good wine, amongst other things. Although it's more for the culinary reasons than the thrills of intoxication. I've also had a few flings, nothing enduring though." Hannibal let Will see the glint loneliness in his eyes. He knew the boy could pick up on that, clever as he is.

"That's barely anything, you're like eighteen, right? I'd assume you'd be more *worldly* than that."

Hannibal looked off distantly, recalling certain memories, another satisfied grin working its way onto his visage. It was clear that he was hiding something, but Will brushed it off.

"So do you just sneak onto homicide scenes for fun, Lecter?"

"You could say that."

“But why this one? There’s nothing left behind here, whoever killed Cassie Boyle just wanted to make a pretty display to mock the Shrike. A little venture into theater. It’s not that interesting.”

Hannibal paid attention to Will’s words. He suddenly understood the boy’s shared fascination with crime. *Perfect empathy.* He knew the killer’s intent exactly, got into his head.

“I suppose there is some artistry in killings like this. Death and art go hand in hand. I’ve seen all the works in every gallery in this area-”

“Looking for something new?” Will suggested. He immediately snapped out of his brain fog, realizing he had interrupted Hannibal. “Shit, sorry. I don’t usually interrupt this much. I don’t know why it’s coming so-”

“Naturally.”

“Yeah.” Will frowned, focusing on a patch of dirt on the ground. He tries his best to focus solely on the afternoon atmosphere and less on the strange banter between him and Hannibal. “This is getting kinda awkward isn’t it?” he blurts out. *Fuck, Graham. Seriously?* “I don’t know I didn’t come here to make friends with strangers.”

Hannibal allowed himself an audible chuckle, head tilted up to the rusty metal above his head. Will glances over, immediately noticing the defined curve of his jaw.

“God forbid we become friendly,” Hannibal teased.

“Yeah, wasn’t looking to talk to anyone. Much less you- no offense,” Will muttered. “I don’t know, I don’t find you that interesting."

They both knew that was a flat lie. Will found Hannibal just as interesting as Hannibal found Will.

"You will," Hannibal smirked.

Will raised his eyebrows, unamused. He threaded both thumbs under the fraying straps at his shoulders and attempted to stand. *Fuck.* A mutinous zipper had caught itself in a hole in the support beam he had been resting on. The body of the bag smacked against the metal, the noise echoing with the rest of the metal bleachers. If the cops didn't hear their chatting over the cameras, they definitely heard this.

The two boys shot each other the same knowing and paranoid look. All of the sweat on Will's body grew ice cold and even Hannibal looked a little startled. It was a weird look. Sure, Will was extremely used to being embarrassed, but seeing Hannibal with anything other than a blank face or cocky grin was unusual. The radio chatter and police banter grew abnormally silent. Abnormally silent to the urgent patter of footsteps on plastic grass, alerted by the noise.

The shock didn't last long, for Hannibal at least. The senior was abruptly composed, a plan stirring around in his head. He jumped up to his feet with a gymnast's precision and adjusted himself, using his hands to brush off the dust on his pants. Then, an unexpected move. Hannibal took his hands to his hair, loosening the style instead of smoothing it. Messing it up just enough. Enough for what, Will was unsure. He had ideas, but he hoped it didn't get to that.

"Forgive me, Will, but this is our best shot of getting out of this with minimal repercussions. Just trust me."

Wordlessly, Will swallowed thickly, trying to bury the swarming anxiety in the gallows of his stomach. He nodded and fixed his eyes on Hannibal.

"Stay there and stay still. I never meant to intrude on your privacy, but you will have to permit me just this once. The police are going to be here any second so I won't have much time to explain."

Will winced at the sudden shadow cast over him. Hannibal wasn't unusually tall, not much taller than himself, but he seemed so small in comparison. He knew where Hannibal was going now, *definitely not ideal.*

"Put your arms around my neck," Hannibal instructed.

"I'm not-" Will was silenced by the nearing party of investigators, now standing increasingly nearer to where the boys were at the front of the bleachers. Reluctantly, he swung his arms awkwardly around the other's neck. Hannibal responded by leaning in closer and wrapping his free hand around Will's back. His hand wasn't actually touching Will, but he was ghosting dangerously close. The other was planted firmly above Will's head on the metal beam he was now caged into. The older boy's knee separated his own, again, Hannibal was careful enough to barely make contact.

"Now, act surprised when they come. I'll do the talking," Hannibal whispered urgently, a final time. He was painfully aware of how closes their faces were. The distance was respectable but from a far it was just close enough to look intimate.

Will pressed his lips into as close of a smile he could get for confirmation. His face was burning even hotter as the blood flow stung under his skin. His pose was stiff and unnatural by comparison, joints locked in a linear position; he looked more like a store mannequin than a lover. His eyes darted around furiously, trying to look at anything but Hannibal. This was the most agonizing few seconds. Will couldn't help but be acutely aware of everything engulfing him: The shakes in his hands, the only increasing rate of his breathing, Hannibal's shoulders being firm and stable, the mint on his breath, and the mellow scent of his cologne. It was unbearable, knowing of all the places in the world he could be, this was where he was; pinned against a metal support beam by fucking *Hannibal Lecter.*

Alana would be jealous- No. What the fuck, Graham?

The rush of blood to his head drowned out the sounds of the nearing police that were soon to break their act up. His blood flow was damn near traitorous, causing his skin to burn red and *other* problems for a later Will. Will questioned how Hannibal was staying so goddamn still. Not a tint of blush to his face, eyes cast respectfully down at their feet, stable breathing.

"Hey!"

Thank fucking god.

“What are you kids-”

Hannibal took his cue to finally break away. He let the officer realize what he thought he saw.

“Oh!” The man said, embarrassed. He lowered his defensive hand. “You kids, *ehem,* know that there’s an investigation going on here, right?”

“My apologies, no,” Hannibal stated. His voice feigned confusion perfectly, yet his language was still painstakingly formal.

The officer made a perturbed grunt. Unimpressed, believing he just busted another couple of lusty teens recklessly about to cause inconvenience. The concern on his face worsened when he looked over at Will. His judgemental glare picked apart the boy, who was currently covering his mouth with both hands, skin a glowing hue of scarlet. “It’s just some pansies making out under the bleachers,” he shouted to the rest of the team. “And you’re sure you knew nothing about the active investigation going on before you two came here to do your little,” The officer wagged a disappointed finger between the two boys. His eyebrow tented up and his posture was exhausted.

“Not a single clue,” Hannibal answered. “Seriously, we were just here to relieve some *frustrations* .” He shot Will a quick glance.

“Yeah,” was all Will could manage.

The cop deliberated for a second before deciding they weren’t worth his time. “Fine, you can go,” he said dejectedly.

That was it? Will watched astonished that a little bit of theater was all it took for Hannibal to get the cops off their back. This town's police force wasn't diligent by any means but Will really thought it'd take more than that.

"Alright, *darling* , let's go," Hannibal projected, walking over to help Will get unstuck from the support beam. He said the term with an alarming amount of comfort. Will feared he might've enjoyed their little rouse a little too much.

"I got it," Will protested, clumsily freeing himself.

Hannibal walked close to Will, resting his arm on the shorter boy's shoulders. They kept up the act until the eyes of the police were off them as they left the stadium.

The sun began to dip behind the houses now. Blues in the sky started to be overtaken by hues of gold and lavender as the afternoon escaped.

"What the hell was that?" Will blurted out, shaken slightly.

"The what?" Hannibal asked, faking innocence again.

Will frowned and shook his head, watching as the asphalt tread under his boots. Hannibal's shiny loafers barely entering his peripherals. "C'mon you know *exactly* what I'm talking about. Was that really the only way out? I can say I'm impressed with the way you can just snake your way in and out of things. But seriously, Hannibal?" Will ranted, thoughts swam around in his head, disorganized. "I'm sure you could've done anything than pretending to *kiss* me and call me darling and all that shit."

The senior's posture dipped slightly, his steps becoming less confident with Will's attack. He clumsily slid his hand into the pocket of his slacks. "I told you. I never meant to be so invasive," Hannibal lamented, voice becoming thick with remorse. *Hannibal Lecter is expressing insecurity! Who knew?* "It was the best course of action, it got us out easily. Preying on the discomfort of others is the easiest way to make a quick getaway. Small towns like this-"

“I’m not fucking gay, Hannibal! I didn’t need to be embarrassed like that, by you nonetheless.” Will stopped walking abruptly. His heels planted themselves stiffly on the side walk.

Hannibal swiveled to look at the boy paces behind him. He watched Will’s hands tremor, fingers threatening to curl into fists. His eyebrows knitted closer together by the second as his eyes glazed with tears.

“What if somebody *saw* that other than that cop? What if somebody *heard* you call me that? I’m sure you don’t give two damns about your picture perfect reputation getting ruined because you’d just manipulate your way out of that too, huh? But me,” Will’s voice was shattering with every word. “What about me? I’m already the school’s goddamn laughing stock, and I can’t stand to move schools again. My dad is about to give up with dealing with my problems, imagine if he heard about this! His son’s moved schools for getting bullied seven times and then he gets caught by cops allegedly kissing a boy under the bleachers!” The words tore through his throat, ripping raw edges into his sentences. “I’m not sure what they do with guys like that in *wherever* you’re from, but here? We don’t play that game!” His life was basically over at this point.

The junior stormed off without Hannibal, fingers digging deeply into the straps of his backpack.

“Will-”

“Don’t talk to me ever again!”

Obviously that didn’t work out.

Will groaned and flopped back onto the bountiful mattress. He stared up at the intricate ceiling above him. The memories slowly came back to him, crawling on his skin as he felt

the draft from the vents enveloping his bare legs.

“Can’t you tell this story any faster. I remember that,” Will complained bitterly. The lingering shame of that evening persisted several days after it happened.

“I don’t know how much you remember, Will. If you can tell me what you *do* remember then I can go faster” Hannibal snapped.

Fuck. Will groaned with his head in his hands, they really were getting nowhere. “I don’t know what I remember beyond after school that day.”

“As for that incident after school, your discomfort wasn’t my intention.”

Will sucked the back of his teeth and let his body sink into the mattress a little more. “ *Discomfort?* Hannibal, that was more than discomfort. I went home from school 3 hours later than normal with the most regretful boner I’ve ever had in my life,” Will confessed.

Hannibal tried not to laugh at the younger boy’s colloquialism. He had been respectful of Will’s space not to point it out at the time. “It was simply just your body’s reaction to things. I think nothing of it if that helps.”

“That’s the problem, Hannibal, you don’t think nothing of *anything* . You’re so humiliatingly shameless, you know that, right?” Will explained. Hannibal was fond of his directness, however rude.

“I don’t know what is it with guys like you. I mean pretending to *kiss* me to get out of a crime scene, and then sharing a bed with me? But then I’m just your brand new acquaintance Will Graham?” Will’s head began spinning, his eyes strained open. He was fatigued enough to fall back asleep but the motor of his mind was full-up and running. There was no way it’d let him sleep if he tried.

The older boy twisted in the bed, readjusting himself to look at the clock. Hannibal frowned, tongue resting at the back of his teeth. “It’s four o’clock. If we go back to sleep now, we will surely miss classes,” he stated, ignoring Will’s comments.

Will rolled over once again to finally face his companion. He deeply wanted to curse himself for thinking how elegant the senior looked in the glow of the moonlight. Cascading hues of blue reflecting off the planes of his face. “It’s not like I was gonna sleep anyways,” he muttered.

“I’ll make us some coffee and an early breakfast while I continue. Any requests?” Hannibal insisted.

“No, not really. Not hungry.”

“Feel free to dress yourself, I’ve laundered your clothes already.” Hannibal gestured to the chair placed next to the door as he left.

Will slipped off the sheets and walked over to said chair. Folded perfectly on the seat were his flannel and jeans, the belt he wore coiled neatly on top. His socks sat in the nest of the belt with his jacket hanging off the tall back. He felt a wave of embarrassment crash violently down onto him at the realization that Hannibal had seen his socks; that Hannibal had gotten him stripped to his socks.

He decided not to think any further, theorizing made it worse.

Exclusive! Is Will Graham Adopting Freshmen Into His Weird Group?

Chapter Notes

dw why this chapter is so short, tbh don't know why it is either

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The air in the hallway was nearly asphyxiating. Will, who was already intensely paranoid, felt the weight of others' eyes on him twofold. He was concerned that everyone already knew what he had done. He feared that the blood still stained his clothes and coated his hands in a thick layer for everyone to see.

But Will killing someone in this town wouldn't be Will's worst crime, not by a long shot. It's who he showed up with and who was watching. He ran a million conversations around in his head, rehearsing how to react. He spaced out in English, and groveled through biology. He stood in front of his locker so dazed that he could fall asleep-

"Hey, Will."

The teen's body jerked back to this reality. He slammed the door. "Yeah?" he answered. *Abigail.* He put on his best smile for her and focused in on the scarf she started wearing instead of her doe eyes. "How're you doin'?"

She grips at the straps of her bag nervously, "Can I sit with you at lunch today?" Her voice was hoarse, as if she had just been crying.

"What lunch do you have today?" Will asks absently. He begins his journey to pre-calc, Abigail walks with him. Precocious thing, she happened to have math with him despite being a freshman. "Sorry for not remembering," Will mumbles. He yanks out one of his earbuds so he can actually process her words in the loud hallway.

“Same lunch as Hannibal. A lunch, after third,” she states matter-of-factly, like she’s taken time to go over her own schedule. “I also have a lot to talk to you about.” She shoots him this intense look. Her eyes, ice cold.

Will cocks a brow and briefly meets her eyes over the rim of his glasses. He doesn’t know what she does, doesn’t remember. “Alright.”

The two stop outside Ms. Du Maurier’s classroom, waiting patiently for the bell to ring.

Will drums his pencil against his head as Du Maurier lectures about partial fraction decomposition. He couldn’t care less. He stares absently at the note catcher on his desk. He mulls over what in the world Abigail wanted to sit with him at lunch for. She was making fast friends in her class, and being seen with him was deemed an insult.

He relaxes a moment, and realizes that Hannibal’s laundry detergent had such a strong scent. Sweat rises to the surface of his palms at the epiphany. He wonders if others have noticed.

They saw you. That’s right. Other people absolutely saw Will step out of Hannibal’s Bentley.

He knew if Freddie Lounds caught that, he’d be framed as Hannibal’s side piece until he either graduated or died. *Whichever came first* . He’s already caught the back end of the things people whispered about him. Rumors about Will had an unparalleled virality about them, to everyone he just couldn’t get weirder. He’s sure that people thought weird things about Hannibal, just too afraid of his imposing status to say anything.

If Alana saw… Will’s mind lingered on the mental image. Alana was fickle when jealous, petulant when she wanted to be. He thought of her lips stretching into a tight frown with worried eyebrows. They were friends once, Alana and Will. But she wanted him to be a pet, a project, and he wanted to kiss her.

“Any volunteers for who can tell me what we do after using synthetic division to depress the polynomial?” The dead silence prompted Abigail’s hand to shoot up in Will’s peripherals. Her eyes glossed over Abigail, dead set on exposing someone who clearly wasn’t paying attention. After all, all math teachers were some kind of sadist. “Mr. Graham,” she started. She repeated his name a couple times.

Will belatedly realized that he was the victim of the cold call. His mind scrambles together the scant memories of what he learned the previous week. Ms. Du Maurier glared at him, impatiently fidgeting with the Expo marker. “Factoring the quadratic?” He answers nervously. The set of his jaw tightens under the scrutiny of the class.

“Correct,” She says succinctly, disappointed. She turns back to the board, drawing over the projector.

Shivers shoot down Will’s spine as he hurriedly copies down her work. The numbers and variables swim into a soup before his exhausted eyes, he still had thirty minutes of this hell left.

Abigail hovers by the doorway, anticipating her companion. “We still on for lunch?” She turns her head in an odd, owl-like manner.

“Sure,” Will answers. “I need to stop by Mr. Crawford’s though, tell him I can’t TA today.”

“I’ll just follow you.”

Will rapped on the doorframe after everyone filed out of the classroom, dodging people with ease. Abigail hid behind him, grabbing onto his backpack.

“Crawford?”

“Will?” The stern man answers back, his eyes transfixed on a report. “Do you need the list?”

“No, I’m actually using my lunch today.”

Crawford gives a quick up and down, setting his jaw in response. He ponders for a minute, irritated that he had to go wrestle those copies from the defunct machine himself. However, Will never takes lunch off, he was concerned that the kid never ate. The teacher flaps his hand in dismissal and Will takes the initiative to bolt off, Abigail clinging to his arm.

Outside, the sun is high, but the wind is brisk. Will finds his usual alcove right outside the building and drops his backpack. He slides down, flannel catching against the brick. He tipped his head back and stared at the ghost of the moon, still visible for some reason at eleven-forty-five in the morning. He thought about stealing some cigarettes from his dad when he got home. Abigail slid beside him and unzipped a purple lunchbox.

“You remember what happened right?” She asked, carefully unwrapping the cellophane on her sandwich.

Will grumbled in response, eyes throbbing from lack of sleep. “No. But if it has to do with Hannibal-”

Abigail takes a huge bite, “It does.” Her free hand flies up to her scarf, adjusting the fabric. “It happened last Friday.”

“It did?” Will asked, still not knowing what the fuck she was talking about. However, his fands felt like they were dripping with blood, he wrang them together, hoping to shake the sensation. Hannibal’s admission that he let Will get away with murder ring in his ears.

“We need to find Hannibal.”

Need. Need, need, need. Will hated how he *needed* Hannibal now. He didn't want to do anything with the senior, but he absolutely needed to figure out what happened. Will let his head fall lazily as his eyes strained over to Abigail. "Yeah?" he replied, contempt. "You go find him. He's probably making out with his girlfriend," He dismissed.

Abigail's face twisted, like she bit into a lemon. Will was notoriously rude, to everyone it seemed. She gulped down the last of her sandwich and took a sip from her decorated water bottle. The silence between the two was painful.

"Fine." She pushed herself away from the floor with grace and walked off. Will watched the wind make her scarf flutter, threatening to blow it away and expose her secrets.

Fuck. Goddamnit, Graham. Guilt consumes Will and he gives in, standing up with protest from his back and ran up to her. After all, there was still twenty-five minutes of lunch left.

Hannibal ate his lunch under a tree in front of the school. It was a strange thing, overgrown roots bursting out of the ground and branches towering over him. He ate, alone.

"Hannibal!" Abigail called. She lit up. Hannibal was her favorite upperclassman.

He offered her a kind smile, the corners of his eyes crinkling. "Abigail." He set down the pencil he was using to sketch.

Will turned away and sighed, paranoid that people were watching too closely. He was extra vigilant for any stray flames of red hair.

"Will," Hannibal greeted. "Join us, have a seat."

Silently, Will complied, taking his seat next to Abigail, who was laying on her stomach, propped up on her elbows. She flipped to a blank page in Hannibal's sketchbook and began doodling flowers.

“I’ve played along, are you guys gonna finally tell me what the fuck it was that I did?”

“You killed my dad, Will,” Abigail answered nonchalantly.

Her eyes never left the page, and Lecter’s vulture stare never left Will.

Chapter End Notes

math related and irrelevant but oh my god college precalc sucks

Reader Exclusive: Is Alana Bloom Hooking Up with Will Graham Again?

Chapter Notes

lol i'll post this one individually bc there's an odd amount of chapters

Will thanked any and every god that his dad had no questions when he arrived home or in the morning. The gruff old man simply slid him his instant coffee and rustled his hair before heading out. He said something but his accent was too thick for Will to parse before he heard the door slam. A swarm of scrappy dogs crowded the doorway at the noise. The boy downed the acerbic liquid when his phone buzzed. Not even Katz would text him this early. Will figured she wasn't even awake.

An unknown number.

Unknown

Hello, Will. I know you are interested in investigating

the unfortunate Cassie Boyle situation. I concluded

that it would be beneficial if we worked together.

- **H**

Seen 5:54 a.m.

How’d you fucking get my number?

Will groaned and slid his phone back into his pocket. He threw his bag over his shoulders and decided to leave for school a little earlier than normal. Of course, he couldn’t go without saying goodbye to his pack of mutts.

The walk was nice. He played his usual playlist and enjoyed the mellow sunlight and brisk air. It stung his skin, but it was grounding, a sharp reminder he was real. He kicked over rocks and branches as dirt transitioned into concrete before him. He clasped and unclasped his hands around the straps of his deteriorating backpack and walked on autopilot.

Buzz.

Unknown

How’d you fucking get my number?

Beverly was kind enough to lend it to me.

Okay.. why do you have hers then?

I’m in the biomedical sciences group chat.

Christ.

Will slid a clammy hand down his face. An involuntary smile pulled at his lips knowing Hannibal Lecter was in a group chat. Something about mundane twenty-first century things and Hannibal didn’t mesh the way they were supposed to. Will changed his contact name while waiting for a response. He rationalized that getting texts randomly from “Unknown” would freak him out someday. Getting texts from Hannibal also freaked him out, but that wasn’t the point.

Hannibal

Christ.

Why are you up so early?

Same as you.

What?

I consider myself a particularly light sleeper.

So you watch me sleep now or something?

No, you just look very sleep deprived.

Ouch. Real polite of you doc.

Oh no. Will wanted to stop texting Hannibal, but he couldn't.

Hannibal

Ha. Anyways, it appears that I've found a
lead. Meet me after classes and we can
discuss it at my residence.

Yeah, whatever.

You dug your grave. Lie in it.

Exasperated, Will flopped into the grass, glasses flying up to his hairline. He let out a pained groan as the rash of shame began its journey onto his face for seemingly the millionth time this week.

“You’re telling me that last night wasn’t the only time I’ve been to your house? Jesus, Lecter you’ve just ruined my life.”

“You’ve convicted me of ruining your life already.”

“Yeah, but how the fuck does this connect to me killing her dad,” Will hissed. “I’d really like to know how I did that.”

Abigail dropped Hannibal’s pencil. “Let him finish telling the story. Jeez, you’re really impatient.”

Will made it through five classes without thinking about those texts from Hannibal. He locked his french horn and sheet music in its designated locker before it crossed his mind again. It caused his eye to twitch, he already couldn’t forgive Lecter for the cop incident. He didn’t want to make friends with anyone at this school, much less Hannibal Lecter: The boy so perfect that merely standing next to him makes you look ten times worse.

He slung his bag over his shoulders and rushed out from the band hallway. Relief washed over him as he remembered it was now his off-period. Afternoon sun bled through the windows. Will figured he could start that essay he was putting off. He passed by a couple hallways, full classes and rows of lockers before his eyes settled on a familiar figure in his

periphery. *Alana Bloom.* Something about his exhaustion caused his better judgment to approach her.

“Hey, Alana.” Clammy hands closed and opened under backpack straps.

“Hey, Will.” Her lips pressed into a line, blue eyes darting away from Will.

He was surprised to notice that he was a little taller than her now, they were the same height last year.

“What’s up?” she asked idly.

“Nothing much, just wanted to catch up. And I was wondering if you wanted to peer edit my paper for Sutcliffe’s.”

Alana rolled her eyes. “Is that so?”

“Yeah, I am like, six pages in and I don’t think I’m getting my wording right.”

Alana’s inability to deny him anything came in handy. “Well, I was just heading to the library anyways.”

“Let’s go,” Will smiled. Something akin to self satisfaction boiled in him. *He* was spending his off-period with Alana Bloom. *Hannibal Lecter* was not. His heart started beating rapidly and he tried to think about how he got to go to the library with Alana Bloom, *alone.* Will’s head swam with the thought of her. He loved her, the *idea* of her. He wanted to be with her in spite of that mistake from freshman year- in spite of Hannibal.

“Are you going to tell me I fucking kissed Alana Bloom?”

“Again?” Abigail clapped her hand over her mouth, stifling a giggle. “No.”

Will shot Hannibal an accusatory look. The senior’s lip pulled into a satisfied smirk. “She’s not lying, Will.”

Will groans and shuts his eyes, feeling the swing of a pendulum in the back of his head. “This lunch is way too long.”

Will hated eye contact, but he never seemed to mind staring. His eyes were trained intently on the girl next to him as she read through his literary analysis. He was sure it wasn’t nearly good enough for her, that she wasn’t insulting his word choice every five minutes out of courtesy. God, his head raced and he didn’t care.

Manicured hands scrolled to the last page of the document. “It’s good, Will.”

“Really?” *That was it?*

“Yeah, I like your thesis. Individualism versus safety in a totalitarian society,” she read.

Will adjusted his glasses and clicked his jaw, slightly nervous to actually respond. He shifted on the bench, closer to Alana. He excused it to himself. He needed to see what she was reading on his computer. That was all. Never mind the his skin burning up at the brush of her hand, his knee touching hers.

“Will?” she asked.

“Yeah?”

“You need to be more confident in your writing.” Her hand travels up to give a pat his shoulders. “Sutcliffe’s not going to like, kill you or something.”

Will did his best to swallow the frog in his throat. He didn’t get why nobody was afraid of the English teacher. Will irrationally hated him, felt like his writing wasn’t actually good enough. Darker parts of his mind thought about the man with his head cracked open, mouth split at the seams and left at his desk. *What’s the symbolism now, mister?* He shivered. *You sound like the fucking Chesapeake Ripper, Jesus.*

He tried his best to give Alana a smile, a pitiful simper came out instead. Smiling wasn’t something he rehearsed very often. “Thanks. Uh, thank you for your help, Alana.”

The bell rang, suddenly, Will was back in the hallway getting stuck behind hordes of freshmen who didn’t know how to walk. Bev called them the living dead and he was inclined to agree. What happened with Alana only now began to resurface in his mind, he didn’t want to think about it. He knew that somehow, Hannibal had wormed his way into that situation.

Body on autopilot, he stopped in front of Crawford’s room, waiting for Beverly. She always caught his attention first anyways.

“Graham,” she called, tempted to grab the boy. “Your eyes are starting to glaze over again.”

“Are they?” he muttered.

Beverly laughed as she pulled him through the door. Will felt like he was watching himself. He drummed his fingers against the lab-resistant tabletops and got distracted by the large pulley in the ceiling. He was barely paying attention, he already knew about ballistics and blood splatter. Bev was stuck making eyes at an Instagram post.

“Molly Foster?” Will whispered, scribbling in the corner of his note catcher. He filled it out completely within the first five minutes of class.

“Jealous?”

“What? No.”

“Will, you like, fully led her on freshman year.”

“I did not.”

“Was Matthew Brown’s party nothing to you?” Only now did the girl’s sharp eyes meet his.

“Oh my god, Bev.” *He was totally not leading her on. What was she even talking about? They got drunk and had some sort of approximation of sex, like regular teenagers.*

She shut her eyes, brows raised. “As far as I’m concerned, you led *him* on too.”

1. *Will was blackout drunk. 2. It was literally just spin the bottle.*

Will rolled his eyes and looked up to see Crawford staring dead at him. Will locked his jaw, and immediately went back to pretending he went the pace of the class. He knew that the teacher wouldn’t be seriously mad at him, he couldn’t be. Jack Crawford was basically Will’s second father. Sure, it felt like he worked the boy to the bone, but Will could barely complain.

Will shut his eyes, allowing a moment of peace before a characteristic buzz in his pocket. A frantic hand fumbled for his phone, holding it below the lip of the desk to avoid prying eyes.

- ***Hannibal: 3 unread messages***

Begrudgingly, Will unlocked his phone.

Hannibal

Will.

Are you willing to skip after this class?

I have something very important to discuss with you. Meet me promptly in the parking lot.

You? Ditching?

Lecter…

Well, I am not. I don't have classes the rest of today.

Of fuckin course you don't.

Rehearsal isn't that important anyways, why not?

Very well then.

Will laid his forehead on the desk, letting out a displeased groan. Beverly scooted over, her chair squeaking obnoxiously against the linoleum.

“What’s wrong?”

“I guess I’m ditching the rest of today.”

“You rebel! I’m proud of you.”

“Bev, shut the fuck up.”

“Oh please, you haven’t even told me why yet.”

“I’ll tell you after class.”

Will was totally screwed.

A Tryst in Lecter's Garden: A Must Read!

Chapter Notes

I d e f i n i t e l y didn't forget abt this fic haha.... yeah, I am in the process of absolutely rewriting the last chapter bc it sucked so yeah :D

Will had no qualms skipping class. It's not like his last two were worth showing up to anyways. He replays the shit-eating grin Bev had on her face when he broke the news that he was ditching class for Hannibal Lecter. He had no idea what was so funny to her.

A sudden breeze smacked him in the face carrying an acrid scent with it as he exited the building. He left out the bus yard and didn't mind the walk to the parking lot. Cloud cover came in swiftly, shielding him from the belligerent sun that attacked his face all lunch. It seeped through the branches of Hannibal's tree like a syrup and stuck to his face in ways he hated indefinitely.

Hannibal was standing with perfect posture next to his driver's side door. Will glared at him for a second, the look disguised by the glare of his glasses. He didn't take any time to pay attention to the other boy's outfit when he left the house that morning. He wore a suit blazer on top of a polo shirt, unbuttoned three down. The white collar stuck out underneath a sweater vest and Will had no idea how he wasn't burning. He raised a polite hand to Will.

"What exactly did you call me out here for?"

Hannibal smiled, an amused thing that bore all of his teeth. "I think a trip to the garden will jog your memory a bit."

"What garden?"

"Our garden."

Like at his house? Will swallowed dryly, he bit his tongue to prevent asking more questions. “Yeah, sure. Okay.” He buckled himself into the passenger side seat and shut his eyes. His lip twitched, mouthing words to himself about how totally fucked he was. A cold hand lands on the juncture between his shoulder and neck, barely grazing his skin. He jumped forward, immediately getting snapped back by the seatbelt.

“Hi, Will!”

“Fuck! Abigail!” The words were not anger towards her, but a verbalized realization. Cold blue eyes shoot to see the ghostly girl in sitting behind him. “Why are *you* ditching class?” he heaved, hands flapping in a futile attempt to calm down.

Abigail turned her attention to the driver’s seat. “Hannibal said that going to his garden would help you remember.”

“Don’t you have a class?”

“No, I have grief counseling. I’m not a fan of the place though.”

“I caught her climbing over the walls yesterday and decided I should just take her with me.”

Will rolled his eyes and exhaled a laugh of disbelief.

“No more climbing walls, Abigail.” Hannibal turned the key in the ignition with a swift motion and pulled out of the school parking lot.

Apparently, Will had dozed off in the car.

Alana gave his shoulder a quick squeeze, a warmer smile than the one she gave him earlier. He thought about that smile all through his engineering class. And he thought about right up until he walked straight into Hannibal.

Wait what?

“Shit! My glasses!” Strong hands braced Will’s shoulders, balancing him. Blood pooled like hot magma under his skin as he looked up at the older boy. Hannibal’s lips pursed into an arrogant smile and the glare of his readers blinded Will. Warm hands brushed against his cheek as the other boy adjusted his own frames almost gingerly.

“Will, perfect timing.”

“Was it really?”

“Yes, this is a perfect time to ask if you’d be willing to see what I’ve collected about the shrike copycat.”

Will worried his lip beneath his front teeth. He had too many options: Decline and be eaten alive by avoiding the case he’d spent tuning into for months, or accept and have to hang out with Hannibal. He’d rather die than admit that he found Hannibal more than a little intriguing-

“Sure.” *Goddamnit.* The word slipped past before his conscience could barricade it between his lips.

Before he knew it, he was swept into the Bentley and driven off.

The Lecter estate looked even fancier than Will last saw it. In the early morning it's just an imposing shadow, but now, he could take in every insane detail. He marveled as Hannibal drove through the gates and into the neatest garage on the face of the earth.

The trio filed near silent into the house.

"Remove your shoes," Hannibal directed to Abigail. A careful hand on Will's shoulder instructed him to stay. " *Oba-San,* I brought some of my friends home to look through the garden." A strict woman posed at the head of the dining table looked up from her book and at Hannibal. "This is Will," Hannibal introduced awkwardly.

Lady Murasaki smiled, "I remember Will." Her eyes were cold on the other boy, knowing.

"Abigail!" The woman greeted with tangible warmth. She immediately welcomed the girl in, "Come, sit, let's have some tea. Chiyoh will be home from her shooting lessons soon."

Hannibal nodded carefully and steered himself and Will out to the garage. Hannibal warned Will that the garden was quite far from the house. Will assured him that the walk was the least of his problems. Will shaded the midday sun from his eyes once more, walking around on autopilot. The two fell into silence with the exception of heavier breathing and footsteps. For once, both of them could say that silence was enjoyable. But the human mind despises silence. Eventually, it will jump to fill the gaps.

"Don't talk to her much?"

"Murasaki?"

"Yes."

Meticulously cobbled stones led the pair from a manicured lawn to wild grass.

“No, I suppose not. When she first adopted me, I did not speak to her. I did not speak to anyone. So I suppose we do not need to speak." Something defensive took hold of Hannibal, "I respect her deeply, I would kill for her, in fact-”

“But she scares you,” Will finished. Blood began to bloom under his skin, embarrassed that he’d rush to such a conclusion. He glanced at Hannibal, the older boy’s teeth barely touched, hesitating. Something glinted in Hannibal’s eyes, dark, a secret.

“You could say that. I am impressed by your ability to glean my afflictions, Will,” he replies, flatly. Will notes this as possibly the only time Hannibal Lecter would ever be caught off guard.

What the fuck, Graham?

Will swallowed thickly, allowing Hannibal to lead him closer to the garden. Step-by-step, he seemed to recover greatly from Will’s intrusion. The younger does everything he can not to shut his eyes and fall into Hannibal’s head. If he did he’d be terrified, and truly obsessed at the same time, unable to break away.

The garden, was filled with robust plants, ones hadn’t even seen before. A small canopied area sat at the center of the maze-like plots of foliage. His ears tuned in to the buzzing of insects, happy to hear the Lecters kept their garden biodiverse. *He didn’t expect less.*

Hannibal stops walking once the two reach the heart of the garden. Wrought iron seating seemed to be held in place by snaking vines. Two chairs sat at the opposite ends of a small table. Hannibal gestured towards the seat and Will settled into it. He recoiled a bit at the awkward lump his backpack made under him, forgetting that he never took it off. Hannibal, on the other hand practically floated into the chair. The older boy recovered a slew of manila folders from the side pocket of his messenger bag.

“I’m guessing these are what we were working on before I killed someone?” Will asked, jaw stiff. A shiver ran down his spine as realization began to sink into him. Did he really want to know how he killed someone? How he orphaned Abigail?

“Indeed they are, we were working on the Shrike. I thought it would be best to organize things into folders. Unfortunately, I cannot give this back to you.”

Will looked on, perplexed until Hannibal slid him the shell of a notebook. The pages from it had been fully removed. Will picked it up gingerly and examined that the scribbles on the cover and the rip on the right hand side was still there.

“Do you know what ‘DO NOT FUCKING TOUCH’ means?” The realization soured within Will. His weird crime diary had just been eviscerated into folders like no big deal. All the printed pictures and newspaper clippings seemed to remain with the segments he stuck them in. But the most mortifying fact of them all was that Hannibal had looked through it. Will was only slightly obsessed with the Shrike, if Hannibal had seen the volumes of work he’d done on the Chesapeake Ripper he’d be done for.

Hannibal’s lip curled into that unfortunately attractive smirk Will wanted to wipe off his face again. A rumbling laugh built in his chest. “I suppose not.”

That answer irked will to his core. So self satisfied and assured, apparently Hannibal Lecter was incapable of doing anything wrong. “Whatever, go on.”

Will liked to believe that Hannibal’s office was larger than three rooms stuck together. He barely understood how the place fit in the house. Hannibal set his bag down in the corner and instructed Will to make himself comfortable. Will picked an armchair at the center of the room and marveled at the sheer amount of books that surrounded him. The voice in his head that chastised him for chasing a lead all the way into Hannibal Lecter’s home was dampened with awe.

Without his shoes on, Hannibal was practically silent. *He was already practically silent.* So, Will did not notice the older boy seemingly materializing in front of his face in the chair opposite to him.

“Impressed? These were all my uncle Robert’s before he passed away. *Oba-San* wanted to keep his paintings but they were taken from her.” No response from the junior urged Hannibal forward, planting a hand on his shoulder. “Will?”

The slightest bit of contact was searing, forcing Will back into reality. “Yeah, yeah. No that’s cool.”

Hannibal smiled, Will always thought his smile was birdlike. “Now, let’s cut to the chase, shall we?”

Will swallowed, “I guess we shall.”

“Okay, tell me, Will, was the killer of Cassie Boyle the Shrike?”

“No,” he answered with confidence. Sweat percolated on the surface of his skin as he was about to spill his guts and vomit the encyclopedic knowledge of a serial killer to someone he despised. He felt his brows knit together in concentration. “I went over this at the scene, not sure if you remember but there’s something about the way Cassie was killed that is so clearly not the Shrike. She was displayed publicly, lovelessly. All actual victims were preserved, never to be found with the exception of one. The way she was presented mocked all the actual victims of the Shrike- A copycat attempting to capitalize off the aesthetics of the real killer, just to make fun him.” Will looks up at Hannibal for the first time, getting locked into that goddamn magnetic stare of his. Hannibal has hung his readers in the collar of his shirt now, making his eyes practically unavoidable. Will notices that his pupils are blown, drinking in the information he’s being fed. Yet, Will can’t help but feel that he’s analyzing the situation on his own.

Internally, Hannibal is grinning, so amused by someone finally understanding his work. In reality, *he* killed Cassie. It was merely for amusement. A kill to stock the fridge and force ridicule upon the actual Shrike. A debased man, one entering his territory.

“I see,” Hannibal replied, feigning discovery. A moment of awkward silence passed between the two boys, but Hannibal motioned his hand towards Will. “It seems as though I’m not as versed in this case as I initially believed,” he lied.

Will shifted his position in the chair, bringing his legs closer to him. Normally, he wouldn’t do this in another person’s house, especially not a rich person’s but his boots were abandoned

in the garage. He felt himself starting to rock, he didn't particularly care. "The copycat is goading the real Shrike to come out."

"I thought the Shrike was only based in Minnesota?"

Will shook his head, cringing as a bead of sweat traveled down a loose curl. "Well he *was.* A girl turned up dead nearby recently, an authentic Shrike murder. So he's not the Minnesota Shrike anymore. The girl, Elise Nichols, she was *put back.* God- that sounds bad, let me show you something. "

Hannibal inclined his head with curiosity. He watched Will mumble some things to himself before pulling something out of his bag. A notebook.

"That's how you got the notebook?"

"Yes."

"I wouldn't just, hand it over like that!"

"You didn't hand it over to me."

Will crossed his arms and rolled his eyes, "Okay, well, what *did* I do?"

The two had been chatting for almost a half an hour, the pictures of every Shrike victim littered the space between them.

Will recalled a time he had been talking to Mr. Crawford about the murders recently. Will swept the shop as the old man quizzed him. Will wanted to ask why exactly he quit being FBI to teach engineering at a shitty high school in the middle of nowhere. He didn't.

"He's got a golden ticket," Will breathed, remembering the harrowing headspace talking to Crawford put him in sometimes. "A girl. Someone he can't kill, so he kills ones that look just like her. He loves her, wants to immortalize her, swallow her whole."

"A cannibal?" Hannibal inquires, concealing mirth.

"They think so, yeah. That's the main takeaway from Elise. She had liver cancer. Ruined the meat, so he put her back." He had already gone over the theory that he and Bev had come up with: Antler velvet, rich in many nutrients was regenerative. Impaling Elise on a stag's horns was a way to apologize, a morbid form of compensation.

"I believe that the Shrike is a father," Hannibal started. He watched Will's eyes light up, as though a flash of lightning had struck behind them. *He was going to help good Will see his face.* "This ticket of his is a daughter."

Will gnawed on his lip in realization. Dots connected in his mind, revealing a much uglier truth. He remembers the victims, what they looked like. Auburn hair, windblown skin, plain, pretty, young, between fifteen and twenty, five foot five or so. His stomach drops.

"When did Abigail move here?"

End Notes

lol I actually have this written and I'll update it periodically or something, 2 chapters at a time bc I'm wildly impatient

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